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## **LUCID DREAMING: A PERSONAL PATH TO FREEDOM**

*by Thomas Hasenberger*



*Thomas, along with fellow TMI Outreach and Residential program trainer Luigi Sciambarella from England, designed and leads the Lucid Dreaming program at The Monroe Institute. Upon meeting at the Professional Seminar at TMI several years ago, Thomas and Luigi discovered they shared a life-long passion and experience—lucid dreaming. Encouraged by TMI's then executive director, Carol de la Herran, the men began collaborating on the development of a highly experiential workshop to guide others in gaining the skills and tools needed to become a self-initiating lucid dreamer. Born in Germany, Thomas now divides his time between his native country and Thailand, his adopted home.*

Our passion for lucid dreaming comes primarily because with lucid dreaming having fun and self-development are no contradiction. Every night our dream consciousness mirrors our life. We experience dreams full of happiness and joy but also our sadness, anxieties, and vulnerabilities are mirrored. For a lucid dreamer, it doesn't matter how it starts. When having a good dream, you ride the wave and awake happy. If it is a dream that reflects your fears, you can start playing, too. While you are aware that you are dreaming, you lead the dream into a joyful story. It is your consciousness; you are the magician in your dream and you can change the story. Every time you do this you release a fear and you gain more and more flexibility and freedom. This freedom is something you also take into your daily life because you know that you are able to transform and live positively.

Many people consider lucid dreaming to be a virtual reality, where you can perform things that may not be considered acceptable conduct in society or according to the standards of their parents, culture, or educational systems. Luigi and I use the dream state for self-exploration and as a communication interface with the subconscious. We also show that this can be done

in a positive, playful way. That is why we designed a program where we teach most of the techniques for lucid dreaming combined with guided exercises, which are very dream-like and stimulate the creativity of our participants to navigate through the dream with an open heart and a joyful attitude.

Because the exercises are dream-like and include surprise elements like normal dreams, whenever there's an unexpected moment and we are totally present, the subconscious has an opportunity to send a clear message. During lucid dreaming you may also slip into an out-of-body experience (OBE) because you let go for a moment. In our program, participants have a lot of OBEs. The difference between a lucid dream and an OBE is that while we are dreaming, we are, as per the definition of a dream, entirely in our own personal unit of consciousness, whereas in an OBE we interact with a greater consciousness system or Reality outside our own consciousness. The lucid dream explores what's within the inner circle or boundaries of self, whilst the OBE leads beyond that. That is why many lucid dreamers can switch easily between the two states and sometimes it is hard to evaluate which state they are in. Experience and practice are the only ways to become certain.

The lucid dream is the perfect way to work and develop one's consciousness during sleep, but not only for self-development. During sleep, we have access to our full creative potential. There are people who solve their business problems, train languages, write poems, create art, or develop their coordination skills for their favourite sport during dreaming. Through lucid dreaming, sleep can become a highly creative time. Furthermore, in old traditions, lucid dreaming is equal to meditation and the dying process. In a dream, we don't often remember a previous dream or our life in the waking state. The capability of staying aware through dream and sleep and to act creatively will one day lead to navigating joyfully beyond that inner circle into the great consciousness system.